

REMARKS

In the outstanding office action dated 05/12/2004, claims 1-22 were examined.

Therein:

claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Takimoto., U.S. patent No. 3,939,031;

claims 1-4, 6, 7, and 17-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Spatafora., U.S. patent No. 6,247,515;

claims 1-3 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Stivani et al., U.S. patent No. 5,443,681;

claims 5 and 13-16 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Spatafora.

The applicant notes with appreciation the indication that claims 8-12, 21, and 22 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form

In response, claims 1-5, 9-20, and 22 have been amended, claims 6-8 and 21 have been canceled, and claims 23-25 have been added. Consequently, claims 1-5 and 9-25 are now pending.

Claims 1-5 and 9-16

Claim 1 has been amended to positively recite the subject matter of original claims 6-8. Accordingly, because this subject matter has been indicated to be allowable, amended claim 1 is deemed to be in allowable condition. Claims 2-5 and 9-16 depend either directly or through intervening claims from claim 1 and are also allowable therewith.

Claims 17-20 and 22

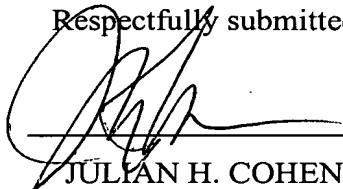
Claim 17 has been amended to positively recite the subject matter of original claim 21. Accordingly, because this subject matter has been indicated to be allowable, amended claim 17 is deemed to be allowable. Claims 18-20 and 22 depend either directly or through intervening claims from claim 17 and are also allowable therewith.

New claims 23-25

Claims 23 includes the subject matter of original claim 10 rewritten to including all the elements of the base claim 1 and of the original dependent claims 6 and 7. Accordingly, because this subject matter has been indicated to be allowable, claim 23 is deemed to be in allowable condition. New dependent claims 24 and 25 correspond to original dependent claims 11 and 12. Claims 24 and 25 depend from claim 23 and are also considered allowable therewith.

In view of the foregoing action and comments, it is submitted that the claims as now presented are all in condition for allowance. Favorable action on the part of the examiner is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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